

THE IMPROVED
ANTIDOTE,
SUPPOSED TO BE MORE
Active in Expelling Poison,
THAN A LATE INVENTION,
BY THE
Rev. Sir Harcourt Lees, Bart.
IN WHICH THE
CATHOLICS ARE VINDICATED
FROM HIS ABUSE,
AND THEIR CLAIMS FOR
Unrestricted Emancipation,
CONSIDERED.

Addressed to the Public.

παση φυλακη την ψυχην τηρησον, μη δια της των λογων ηδονης παραδεξ
αιμενος τε λαθωμεν των χειρονων ωσπερ οι ταδηληθηρια μελα τε μελισο προσ
15/μ.ενοι.

BASIL.

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TO THE PUBLIC,

&c.

SHOULD a great and commercial People experience an unlooked for reverse of fortune; should a rapid decay of Trade, a long protracted and ruinous War, an expenditure of the Public Money, at once lavish and unnecessary, should even all these causes conspire with an oppressive national debt, in reducing them from opulence and prosperity to the lowest ebb of distress, the consequences must be melancholy and alarming: On one hand, the People, impatient of this calamitous change, will murmur against Government, and proceed to disorderly and tumultuous Insurrections. On the other, Administration, foreseeing danger to its own permanence and safety, will perhaps, adopt coersive measures, not altogether consistent with the liberty of its subjects:—Under these circumstances, every well intentioned mind will be deeply affected with concern, for the welfare of his country; various means will be recommended of healing its disorders, or, at least, of mitigating their virulence; and no one can be reprehensible in proposing a

Remedy, or an alteration, even, though the success be doubtful:—Influenced by such considerations, we also appeal to the indulgence of a generous Public, and should the application we offer prove beneficial, the utmost wish of our heart will be gratified, should it, on the contrary, be neglected or derided, the consciousness of an upright intention, must in some measure console us.

An Antidote has been already prescribed by a Revd. Baronet, we presume with the same view; the application of which, however, in our opinion, would tend to cherish the malignancy of the disease, rather than to eradicate its cause:—Wherefore, alarmed for the constitution of the patient, should it be adopted, and at the same time, though we acknowledge and applaud the Revd. Author's anxiety in this case, suspecting that he would prefer a partial to a complete Restoration, we humbly beg leave to state our reasons for differing in sentiment with a man of his consummate knowledge and experience, together with our objections to his Antidote.

That the present crisis is an alarming one, every man capable of reflection, will readily admit, that, however, every artifice of audacity and craft has been exerted (and with success exerted) to undermine the religious, moral, and political sentiments of the great mass of the manufacturing and agricultural

orders of Society in England, seems to require some farther proof, than the mere assertion of the Author, before we can assent to it, with an equal degree of conviction:—Is it probable that, notwithstanding the firmness which has so eminently distinguished the present Administration, such artifices should be resorted to with impunity? Is it possible that success should attend such artifices, notwithstanding the vigilance of Ministers, so unhesitatingly displayed in the removal of Lord Fitzwilliam? Perhaps, the Revd. Author meant obliquely to censure Administration, for overlooking such attempts in the first instance, and subsequently, for not foreseeing and guarding against their pernicious effects, for not suppressing tumultuous assemblies, when, (according to his assertion) the then existing laws, were of sufficient force to stamp the greater part of them with the Seal of illegality.

It is a melancholy consideration, that the Christian Religion, which inculcates universal good will and beneficence, as the peculiar doctrine of its founder, should have been not unfrequently perverted, in consequence of the self-interested and prejudiced views of individuals, into an instrument of cruelty and oppression; and it is probable that this perversion should have an influence, in bringing into disrepute the Religion we profess, (which is meant we presume,

by the overthrow of our God) far more prevalent than the effusions of impiety and atheism, however circulated in private, or openly and daringly boasted of;—The pure and simple precepts of Christianity call forth our utmost admiration, the sanctity and beneficence of its founder, excite in us reverence and love, can then these impious and atheistical dogmas (inspiring us but with horror) can these dogmas it may be asked, counteract the influence of the Religion in which we have been educated, which we have been taught, and which we are inclined from its pure morality to respect? It is the abuse of Christianity, its pretended friends, not its open and avowed antagonists, that will ever abridge its permanence or diffusion.

Power, wealth, and consequence, are the prime motives of human exertion, and when once in possession of these objects, men are equally anxious to preserve, as they originally were to acquire them :—the establishment of Hierarchies is of human invention, and of course, must partake in the imperfections of humanity; These Hierarchies vest in the several members composing them, no small share of profit and authority, to retain which, is their common interest; whenever the particular tenents, for the maintenance of which, the establishment was originally formed, are called in question, its members, alarmed at the impending

danger, resort to every means in their power, of upholding their own, and of repelling the influence of their assailants, among which, persecution may perhaps appear a ready and effectual mode of quelling all opposition.

The Church of Rome exceeded all other Hierarchies in extent of Dominion, of Power, and of Influence; its exertions, therefore, against all assailants would be proportionably vigorous, its persecutions proportionably extensive:—these assertions are not advanced with the view of vindicating Persecution, they are meant merely to account, in some measure, for its origin;—convinced that the God of Mercy can delight only in Virtue and Integrity, every reflecting mind must abhor and condemn the mistaken zeal of those, who think they promote the service of the Divinity, by torturing and afflicting his creatures:—but have the members of the Protestant Establishment entirely abstained from the exercise of this instrument, to establish or confirm their Power? Are they, altogether, innocent of resorting to this object of their reprehension? For a solution of these questions we may recur to our own domestic annals. Has not the bulk of the Irish Nation been subject to the will and caprice of a few individuals (in comparison with its population) and this, for adhering to the religion of their forefathers?—Have not the ministers of this

religion (after being compelled to seek their education in some foreign country) been debarred from the exercise of their sacred functions except by stealth or privacy?—Have not the adherents to this Religion been shackled in every effort to better their condition?—Have they not been rendered incapable of acquiring real property?—If possessed of such property, have they not been subject to its entire forfeiture by information or discovery?—Were not such forfeitures intended to act as allurements for children to inform, even, against their own parents?—Was not every father of a family liable to punishment for educating his children, in that religious persuasion, which he esteemed the only true one?—Were not Catholics ineligible to any office of power or trust?—Were not these Acts in force for nearly a century?—Many other grievances, equally oppressive in addition to these, were inflicted on them in direct violation of the Treaty of Limerick, in which it was stipulated, that the Irish should be admissible to all the Privileges of subjects, upon taking the oath of Allegiance, without being bound to take the oath of Supremacy:—our domestic annals, then, afford a strong presumption that the Protestant Establishment has been no less culpable, in the exercise of persecution, as an instrument to support its power, than the Romish Hierarchy so much

inveighed against; whilst its present conduct, in still withholding from the Catholics a full participation in the privileges to which its Protestant Subjects are admitted, is a convincing proof that it continues actuated by a spirit of intolerance;—not to particularize the absurd calumnies, the foul misrepresentations, so vehemently urged against them, and of which some of its ministers (we regret to observe) are too intemperate in the application;—strange inconsistency that there is in mankind, when the very means they severely reprehend, are not frequently applied by themselves.—Can it be supposed, that men of well cultivated understandings, should be so lost to all sense of morality, so destitute of respect for their own characters, as to look upon wilful perjury as a virtue, when resorted to for particular purposes, or particular interests?—Can it be admitted that men, many of them eye witnesses of, and sufferers in the late revolutionary calamities on the Continent, when they return home should, by the most atrocious of crimes, voluntarily endanger the peace and tranquility of their native Country? Their own conduct is a full refutation of the calumnious charges advanced against them, a positive proof that they seriously regard their moral obligations;—they are, not only, peaceable in their own demeanor,—they render the people, of whom they are the pastors, quiet

and inoffensive ;—were they disposed to estimate wilful perjury as venial, or, in some particular instances, as laudable, they would recommend it to their several flocks, and thus, would the Catholics, by being freed from the restraint of morality, become admissible to all the privileges of subjects ; but it is the part, only, of an abandoned profligate, to profess his conformity with the established doctrines, and to violate the most solemn engagements, for the advancement of his own private interest or ambition ;—the man of integrity disclaims all compromise with his conscience, he will submit to every privation, and will encounter indigence and obscurity, rather than deserve the imputation of guilt :—the express denial of the Catholic Universities that any earthly power can grant absolution for perjury, the solemn abjuration of such a doctrine by the Priesthood themselves, but above all, the uniform tenor of their conduct, proves that these calumnies are altogether unfounded.

National reflections, it has been observed, are not justified in theory, nor on any general principles ;—the same observation will hold good in regard to Sects, Parties, or Professions :—particular individuals may, undoubtedly, be just objects of censure, particular tenets of reprehension, but indiscriminate abuse, is the offspring of prejudice or malevolence, it can never derive its origin

from sober reason and impartiality.—To follow the author of the Antidote through his abusive rhapsody against the Schismatics, would, perhaps, engage us too far in scurrility, to examine into the tenets, he attributes to them, will, at least, more usefully employ our attention. A new sect has been lately formed, the constitution of whose church, he says, instructs its adherents that, through belief, they will escape from the guilt and punishment of sin; this proposition, advanced as one of the tenets of the new sect, is scarcely intelligible;—that a due portion of belief will exonerate us from the punishment of sin, may be readily understood, however we may doubt of its truth, but that the commission of sin will not involve us in guilt, is a proposition that cannot without difficulty be comprehended. The Revd. Author may mean perhaps, that they maintain faith to be more meritorious than good works, a doctrine which has been ascribed to many of the sectaries, but, as it is not included by him who founded our Religion, among the immediate requisites for salvation, it ought to be examined with the utmost caution, and, if upon such an examination, it should appear disadvantageous to the interest of society, it ought at once to be rejected—according to this tenet, its adherents are not required to cultivate those good qualities, which are beneficial to mankind; they

neglect the occasions of beneficence, they lose even the dispositions of benevolence, in cultivating faith, which quality above all others, will insure their acceptance with God. They expose themselves to the frauds of knaves, or the errors of fanatics, into which frauds and errors however, they dare not examine, as to doubt, is to fail in that essential point, on which they found their future hope;—under the influence likewise of this principle, the tenor of their conduct becomes a matter of no moment, it induces negligence in regard to their duties, as men in a state of society, since active virtue can be of no avail, where faith is esteemed the sole requisite for justification:—a less grave argument also, though upon so serious a subject, may, perhaps, be not inaplicable. Faith depends upon ignorance, of course the less a man knows, the more he has to believe, hence the most ignorant, with a due supply of credulity, will become the most meritorious of christians:—we would moreover, recommend it to the Revd. Author, of the Antidote, to examine more accurately into his own Articles of Belief, as required by law, before he censures this doctrine of the Sectaries.

They hold, moreover, as the Rev. Author informs us, farther, that, if once justified, no outrage they can afterwards commit, no sin (it does not signify of how horrible a nature, they can be guilty of) will deprive them of eternal

salvation;—We readily join with Sir Harcourt Lees in reprobating such a tenet, it is absurd and presumptuous;—The determinations of God are impenetrable by man;—his acceptance of our feeble efforts to conciliate his favor, can be discovered only by the Revelation he has communicated.—How then can we become confident in our own justification, during our present state of existence, in which we are unceasingly liable to error? The very supposition involves in it an absurdity;—but to arrogate to ourselves exemption from punishment for all future transgressions, is to assume the peculiar province of the Deity, and is equally impious, as it is presumptuous;—this tenet is also subversive of general Benevolence,—its votaries must, necessarily, look upon themselves as the sole partakers in justification, and the rest of mankind as outcasts from God's Mercy. They will esteem them, therefore, but little entitled to their consideration and regard;—the conceit of being justified must originate either in actual, or fancied inspiration, but inspiration is a real feeling of the Divine Presence, enthusiasm a false one, and the effects are nearly the same in either case,—how then will they guard themselves from misapprehension? how will they be able to distinguish between Divine Inspiration, and mere mortal enthusiasm?—The former will, we must acknowledge, dissipate all doubt, and

confirm them in virtue, but the latter may lead them into errors, which it will be difficult, if not impossible to repair:—may not these tenets however, be somewhat overcharged, I do not mean by design, but through misapprehension.—The consciousness of a scrupulous discharge of their relative duties may, in some instance, give birth to presumption, and leave men to conceive themselves entitled to justification from their own superior merits; but these sectaries strongly impressed with the imperfection of human nature, attributing such conceptions to the arrogance of human reason, regard Faith as an humble acknowledgement of their incompetence to merit the Divine Favor, they rely solely on the Mercy of God for justification;—hence their preference of faith, in comparison with their own exertions for this purpose;—by these means, however, their minds became enervated, their reason less vigorous, they are less inclined to exert it, and more open to the fervor of enthusiasm, which may, not improbably, inspire an opinion, that themselves are favored with a Divine Communication; that hypocrites and imposters will take advantage of this disposition is more than probable, but hypocrites and imposters abound in all persuasions, even in the Established Church, a good mind may be deceived, but it is hoped will not be perverted by them;—the absurdity of such doc-

trines may be offered to their consideration, convince their reason and they will abjure them, but, if this delusion tends only to sweeten their present enjoyments, and render them confident in future hope, why should they be grossly reviled for their belief?

“ But (he proceeds) should these schismatics form a Coalition with the sworn enemies of our Church and constitution, the pious and merciful Papists (as Lord Doughtmore calls them) whose Priests will give them absolution, while the imaginations of the fanatic Enthusiast will justify him, I should be glad to know what would soon be the fate of both Church and King in this great Empire” Here the Rev'd. Author displays his motives for administering to the public, foreseeing danger from the envenomed shafts of the fanatic, and from those of the Papist, armed with a still more deadly poison, he compounds an Antidote that he may counteract their pernicious effects, he expresses indeed, the most decided contempt for Dr. Dromgooles Prophecy, though he evidently apprehends its accomplishment,—but Dr. Dromgoole's prophecy is as harmless as himself was uninspired; the Protestant Church may defy external violence, her danger proceeds from her own internal system, she cherishes, within her own bosom, a principal of decay, which unless Correctives be applied, must terminate in dissolu-

tion : The Clergy of the establishment have been successful in their pursuit, they have possessed themselves of the objects to which they aspired Power, Wealth and Consequence: but in all human affairs, the completion of our desires is generally succeeded by inactivity, after a successful termination of our labours, we sit down to enjoy with ease and tranquility, the good things of this life, so it is with the Clergy of the establishment, their zeal is grown luke warm, their exertions are relaxed; In their Churches, instead of the animated advocate infusing into his audience the love of Religion, with admiration at its excellence, we too frequently find an indolent drone holding forth to a drowsy congregation : In the conventicle, on the contrary, we may behold the schismatic, ardent in zeal, earnest in his exhortations, vehement, impetuous, and enforcing by his impressive manner, the uninterrupted attention of his auditors ;

* * Se vis me flere dolendum est
 Primum ipsi tibi * * * *
 * * * * *
 Si dicentis erunt Fortunis absona dieta
 Romani tollent Equites Peditesque Cachinum.

The cause of this essential difference is, that the Clergy have already attained the summit of their ambition, whereas the Fana- tic is still engaged in the pursuit after profit and estimation :—should it be represented that, with respect to the establishment, there

are gradations in preferment, and dignities, with princely endowments, sufficient to excite emulation even in the most indolent of its members,—we acknowledge that such is the fact,—but how are they distributed?—Are they held out as inducements for exertion, as the appropriate rewards of diligence and merit?—By no means:—They are universally disposed of through the channels of family influence, or parliamentary interest:—the minister for the time being (in the name of his sovereign) has the uncontrouled disposal of Church dignities, and it is probable (it might be said notorious) that he will rather consult how he may best strengthen his own interest for retaining his situation, than attend to the characters and qualifications of the applicants:—it is, by no means, intended to call in question the methods, by which the present venerated dignitaries of the Church arrived at their eminence, their exemplary conduct proves that they deserve it, they are beyond dispute, endowed with piety, learning, and conscientiousness in discharge of their sacred functions, but will their successors in office, succeed also to their good qualities? The future probable consequences should therefore occupy the attention of the public;—under such circumstances, the minister may appoint to these dignities, men totally destitute of the necessary qualifications; they, imitating the minister, may

confer their patronage upon their own immediate connexions, or upon such fawning sycophants only as are best versed in flattery and insinuation ;—can a clergy, thus constituted, command the respect of the people? on the contrary, they will excite contempt rather than reverence :—hence may be discerned the principle of decay in the system, which, unless guarded against with the utmost vigilance, threatens to prove fatal :—the Roman Catholics, swayed by these facts, and their attendant consequences, hesitated at the proposal of Emancipation, when clogged with the Veto ;—the clergy foresaw, that in consequence of the Veto, they would, in fact, become dependant upon the minister for all future promotion ; the laity were alarmed, lest the priesthood should be corrupted, whilst they suspected that, by these means, the people in general would be demoralized, Emancipation therefore, upon such terms, they wisely determined to reject, and they merit the applause of the public for this their virtuous determination.—“ Ere long” (the Revd. Author fervently prays) “ may there
“ be prepared and enforced a stronger test
“ than the articles of religion, to clear our
“ Parishes and to save our children from the
“ cruel consequences of Evangelical Instruc-
“ tion,” (by which expression he is supposed to mean the errors of fanaticism.) Would he then, out of pure good will to the Protestants,

enlarge their measure of Faith as already prescribed by law, and still farther controul their reason? Is he aware that the defection of many, even of the Protestant clergy, proceeds from a repugnance to these articles, and would he encrease the schism? His hostility to the sectaries may be reasonably suspected, when he recommends a mode, so evidently, tending to increase their numbers. The Catholics are charged by him, with being sworn enemies to their Protestant fellow subjects, he would, notwithstanding, imitate the conduct he reviles, and render the hostility between all parties irreconciliable;— he would, even arm the dignitaries of his Church with more extensive powers, and convert those, who ought to be models of Christian charity, into instruments of unchristian persecution: but the Rev. Baronet has, perhaps, a mitre in contemplation, and is anxious, ere he wields the crozier, that the office may be invested with more ample means of exalting the Protestant Ascendancy, at the expense of all who differ from its doctrines; It is to be hoped, however, that, should he arrive at this proud eminence, he will exercise its present powers, unaided by additional ones, with temperance and discretion.

The Public then will cease to wonder that the Revd. Author should so strongly object to a right honourable gentleman's declara-

tion, in answer to a Catholic Address, viz : that he is at a loss to account for the reasons that operate, to prevent the Catholics from being unrestrictedly emancipated," since this declaration militates against the Protestant Ascendancy;—with due submission, however, to the learned Author's accumulated Experience ("having, from the earliest
 " period of his academic course, been in the
 " habit of devoting a considerable part of
 " his time in the acquirement of knowledge,
 " and of informing his mind upon matters
 " connected with the History, Politics, and
 " Religions of his country. Having been
 " accustomed, likewise, to pass such time in
 " the society of the most eminent and able
 " Writers, Politicians, and Statesmen, of
 " ancient and modern days.") We cannot but accord with the above stated declaration of the Right Honorable Gentleman, as equally just and liberal;—if the co-operation of the Catholics, as fellow subjects, be expected, why should they be debarred from the privileges of the subjects?—If their attachment to the Constitution be a desirable object, why not attract them by the united motives of interest and affection?—But how can they be interested in, how can they affect a Constitution, which excludes them, in particular, from its benefits and confidence?—Notwithstanding, however, that we acknowledge the justice and liberality of this decla-

ration, we must beg leave to express our dissent from the same Right Honorable Gentleman, when (according to the Report of a recent debate) he pretends to define the term Liberty, by *Potestas faciendi quicquid per leges liceat*;—the power of doing whatever may be permitted by the laws, points out, only, that peculiar portion of liberty allowed by each respective Government, to its appropriate subjects, but can never be substituted for the general term itself.—In the Eastern regions, where the Prince is despotic, where the will of the Sovereign is the law of the state, the liberty of the subject will be bounded by the Will of a Tyrant; under such circumstances the people are mere slaves;—hence, the Right Honorable Gentleman's definition is equally applicable to Slavery, as to Liberty,—it may, however, be looked upon as the definition of a lawyer, and as lawyers, in general, accommodate their pleadings to the taste and interest of their clients, it may be presumed, that the Right Honorable Gentleman adopted his definition to the interest, and peculiar taste of his employer:—in the course of his harangue on the same occasion, the Right Honorable Gentleman is reported to assert, (if we understand the report aright,) that the great body of the people has no right to enter into discussions concerning civil polity, or the immediate measures of Government, an as-

sertion that does but little credit to his head, or his heart.—It may incline the people, however, to examine into the Right Honorable Gentleman's own claim to this important privilege;—it may also be asked, who are interested in the measures adopted by administration?—Is it the public at large? or is it the ministry? The ministers are, indeed, a part of the people, but a failure in vigilance, with respect to their own immediate interests, will never be attributed to them; the security, the property, the liberty of the people, are at stake, and it behoves them to be equally attentive to their concerns:—to whom are ministers responsible?—to the representatives of the Nation:—who are the constituents of this representative body?—the people:—in order then to estimate the merits of a candidate, the people should become competent judges of the excellence of their own Constitution, and of the qualifications necessary, in a representative, to watch over and to maintain its inviolability;—a close inspection therefore, into the System of Government, and into the conduct pursued by their own representatives, is a duty they owe themselves,—their fellow-subjects, and their posterity;—the upright senator will also invite this serenity, whereas the corrupt fool of a crafty minister will endeavour to evade enquiry, as in the event of detection, he contemplates his own disgrace.

Neither does the Revd. Author spare the Radical Reformers, "Who (he says) under the pretence of Petition, have alone in view the ascertainment of strength, for the purposes of desolation."—that immense multitudes assembling from all quarters, with the intent of framing Petitions for a reform in their representation, is alarming to the peaceable phlegmatic subject, cannot be doubted, but it is no less certain that in general, they conducted themselves on these occasions, with the utmost tranquillity and discretion:—if (as he maintains) Government were armed with sufficient powers to suppress the meetings, why were they not resorted to in the first instance? why connive at such scenes, even in the Metropolis, where they must undoubtedly be the most formidable, and thus impress upon the people an idea of their legality?—Why encourage a frequent repetition of them, and thus give occasion for the fatal occurrences at Manchester?—If it be true that prevention is better than a cure, were not the Ministers remiss innot in stantly exerting their powers? and that they had these powers, we have the Revd. Baronets own authority.—Why, then, resort to new measures, when the existing laws were sufficient for the immediate occasion?—A free Press is generally looked upon as the surest bulwark against the encroachments of power; to it also, we are indebted

for the various improvements in Arts, in Sciences, and even in virtue and religion, when considered as Sciences;—the unrestrained privilege of questioning every proposition, and discussing every subject, greatly contributes to the investigation of truth; should the liberty of the Press, degenerate into licentiousness, a legal remedy has, long since been provided;—should it encourage tumultuous meetings, as the former laws (according to Sir Harcourt Lees) were of sufficient force to suppress such assemblies, a farther restraint was unnecessary, and uncalled for;—should it disseminate Blasphemy through the nation, the good sense of the people will soon reject and condemn it, as is evident from the several verdicts returned against the publications of such a nature;—does then, the Baronet indulge in irony, when he extols the conduct of administration? on the contrary, we rather suspect that, misled by his own voracious appetite for praise, in too liberally dispensing it to others, he has unguardedly conveyed censure, where he meant but to commend.

The liberty of the Press, is without doubt, liable to abuse, so is every privilege we enjoy, as men or as subjects, but, if it be once admitted that the abuse of any privilege by a few individuals, is a sufficient reason for withdrawing it from the Public at large, all their privileges as free men will be succes-

sively forfeited:—If, indeed, Government had not been possessed of sufficient means for remedying the apparent disorders, they had had a decent apology for resorting to new measures, and restrictive expedients; but, when the Revd. Author acknowledges the competence of the powers vested in Ministers, originally to suppress such assemblies, he according to our apprehension, (though perhaps, not designedly,) censures their conduct in neglecting to do so.

That seats in the House of Commons, are to be purchased, is as notorious as the sun at noon day, according to a noble member of the present Administration, who is reported, in the public papers, to have made use of this expression, on being convicted of bartering or attempting to barter a seat in that house, for a Writership in the East India Service:—it is no less confidently affirmed, that, in many instances, Boroughs (intended to return representatives of the commercial part of the Empire) are become the properties of private individuals, who either appoint their own Members (with this particular proviso, that they shall vacate their seats, unless they vote agreeably to the will of the individual appointing them) or without hesitation sell them to the best bidder:—it even, sometimes happens, that the Aristocracy of a county (by which I mean the proprietors of great landed estates) con-

sult together, how many votes each of them can command (for they conclude that every tenant must vote according to the direction of his landlord) and proceed to put in nomination such candidates, as may have secured the weightiest interest with themselves, who are generally successful; whether are they, then, the representatives of the people, or of a few individuals constituting this Aristocracy?—Are these practices consistent with the Constitution? or rather is not its very principle violated by them?—in consequence of these abuses, it may reasonably be conjectured, that the representative body will become corrupt;—that their own immediate interests will outweigh all consideration for the public; and that they will utterly disregard the rights and privileges of the people, to protect which, however, they were originally instituted:—are the people culpable if aroused by such greivances? they petition for a Reform in the Commons House, well aware that the long duration of Parliaments, not only gives birth to, but accelerates the progress of corruption; if they aim at an annual, rather than a septennial parliament, concluding that, by how much the shorter the period of their parliamentary existence may be, the Administration will become by so much the less able and less willing to corrupt the members, and that even should any individuals of the representative body betray their

trust, the period will soon arrive, in which they may elect more worthy representatives?—It has been asserted that this is contrary to the nature of our boasted constitution; but, if the system be imperfect in this one particular, why not amend so material a defect?—Or is the constitution immutable but for the benefit of the Aristocracy, whilst every change is inadmissible, that will protect the people at large in the due enjoyment of their rights and privileges?—Is the change from a Triennial, to a Septennial Parliament (brought about by the representative body, in direct violation of their constituents' rights;) is this change, it may be asked, less hazardous than one which purposes only to guard against the corruption, and to correct those abuses which have almost imperceptibly crept into the representation?—As the existence of corruption in the representative is too probable, so is its prevalence in the constituent body too notorious:—election by ballot, it has been supposed, will provide a remedy against this evil;—it will remain unknown to the candidates for whom the voters may poll, the application of bribery therefore will be ineffectual, as, notwithstanding his acceptance of a bribe, the voter may still poll, according to his inclination or his conscience, without the fear of a discovery.

In regard to the universal suffrage, it must be acknowledged that every indivi-

dual, in the state, has an interest in the proper administration of its affairs, and that Government will, sometimes, need the support, even of its meanest subjects; if, therefore, they are interested in, and contribute to the support of Government, they are entitled to a participation in its privileges;—the privilege they claim is the Elective Franchise, and as the lower house is called the Commons House of Parliament, why should not the members, instead of representing property, be in fact the representatives of the People?—At the same time such material changes adopted on a sudden, might produce tumult and disorder, they might occasion convulsions, attended with far more dreadful effects, than the evils they purpose to remedy;—but when a minister acknowledges corruption in his own conduct;—when the sale of Boroughs is notoriously practised;—when, in some instances, the representatives of a County are returned by the influence alone of a few powerful individuals;—when the late convictions, in the House of Commons, for bribery, prove that it is frequently, if not generally practised by the candidates for seats in that house, and that it has a pernicious influence upon the constituent body;—it cannot be disputed, but that some remedy ought instantly to be applied, in order to eradicate, or at least to check the wide spreading infection.

Lord Grey, Lord Grenville, the Whig party, even the members of the opposition are collectively abused by this Author; Lord Grey and Lord Grenville, however, together with many other individuals whom he severely censures, are men of acknowledged talents and information, as is evident from their general conduct, and the speeches they have delivered in various Parliamentary debates; but they differ in opinion from his Reverence, if however, every man, who thinks differently from the learned Author, be a profligate or a blockhead, we suspect that, besides himself, he will scarcely find a wise or a virtuous individual throughout the great Empire.

He again resumes his attacks upon the Catholics, we shall, however, in the first instance, notice three questions, one particle of which he so confidently defies them to refute:

1st. “Does not a Papist kneel down before, pray and bow to images, pictures, and pieces of old wood representing our Blessed Saviour, the Virgin Mary, and many Saints, and does he not do this for the purpose either of paying adoration to these identical pieces of wood, old sheets of oil cloth, with faces smeared on them, almost as hideous as most of those you will see at the Catholic Board, on reading one of Robert Peele’s Anti-catholic speeches, or to their likenesses?”—In an-

swer to this question we beg leave to refer to the catechisms of the catholics, in which occur the following questions and answers:—Is it lawful to adore the blessed Virgin or the saints?—No: for by adoration is here meant the honor due to God alone.—Do the the commandments forbid us to honor the Saints?—No: for the honor we give them is different from that which we pay to God, we honor the Saints as friends and faithful servants to God.—If it is forbid in Catholics to worship the Saints, can it be supposed that they will pay adoration to their image, pictures or representations?—Or, is it consistent with probability that the same Church will direct them, in their riper years, to practise, what it has taught them when pupils, to reject and avoid?—The council of Trent has, without doubt, declared, that due honor and respect be given to images of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the other Saints;—and who can deny that that degree of honor and respect, to which they are entitled, should be paid these, or any other representations?—It is natural to be affected at the Representation of a dear departed friend and benefactor; the Catholics look upon them as their best of benefactors, they therefore pay them a due degree of honor and respect, should they, however, exceed this degree, they are not only culpable, but obnoxious likewise, to the censures of their own Church:—the

Protestants themselves regard King William III. as their benefactor, of course they honor and drink to his memory, some even have been so far inflamed with enthusiasm, as to drink to his glorious and immortal memory on their bare knees, are not these Protestants equally idolatrous with the Catholics ?

Secondly, “ He wishes to know whether a
 “ Papist does not pray to Saints and Angels,
 “ and invoke their intercession, thereby ma-
 “ ing Gods, not only of Angels, but even
 “ of dead men, although expressly informed,
 “ by God himself, that there is but one me-
 “ diator with the Father, not only of redemp-
 “ tion but of intercession also, which is our
 “ blessed Saviour, and in doing so is he not
 “ guilty of idolatry ?” That the Roman Ca-
 tholics intreat of Saints and Angels to for-
 ward petitions in their behalf, for obtaining
 the divine mercy, is acknowledged, but that,
 in doing so, they mean to worship them as
 Gods, or to incur the guilt of idolatry, is as
 confidently denied :—they dread through an
 humble confidence of their own demerits,
 to offer from themselves an immediate ad-
 dress to the Deity :—and as Christ himself
 has given an example of praying for others,
 even his persecutors, in those memorable
 words, “ Pardon them O Lord, for they know
 “ not what they do ;” so the Catholics may
 probably imagine that the Saints and Angels
 whom they address, will petition in their be-

half, and as they are pure in comparison with themselves, these petitions will have greater effect, than the immediate addresses of a polluted sinner—we think also, that the answer to the first, is a sufficient answer to this question.

Thirdly, “ He is induced to enquire whether a Papist does not pay divine adoration to a mixture of flour and water, made up by the hands of an illiterate and possibly profligate priest, contrary to the figurative sense and meaning of the Holy Scripture, and in direct opposition to reason and common understanding? does he not believe that a Popish Priest has the power of making a God? and does he not bow down and worship this worse than golden image?” —It may be asked the Revd. Baronet if he ever enquired before administering the holy Communion to his own flock, whether the bread provided for the purpose, were made by pure and undefiled hands, whether the wine were genuine, or brewed by some rascally vintner;—and is not the term profligate, equally applicable to a minister of the establishment, as to a Popish Priest, particularly, if the minister devotes much of his time to the joys of the chase, and (we may naturally suppose) its consequent festivity; whilst the Priest is laboriously and almost constantly employed in the conscientious discharge of his sacred functions? as to the

adoration paid to the Host, the Catholic believes that the Body and Blood of Christ (acknowledged to partake of the Godhead) are actually present, and can he justly be called idolatrous for paying adoration to the presence of Divinity?—the learned gentleman may also be requested to explain what he means to impress upon the mind of a Catechumen, by the following words: “the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper.”—Let it be understood, that we by no means, recommend these doctrines, they may possibly give occasion of offence to such tender consciences as the Baronet possesses, they are matters of belief, and therefore left to every man’s own determination;—since, however, some particles of his questions have been absolutely and with truth denied, whilst others have been so far answered, we hope, as to exculpate the Catholics from all criminality either in act or intention, we may conclude, that should a Cardinal’s hat be now engaged to the Revd. Baronet, he will perhaps, not only be almost, but altogether inclined to renounce his own faith, and turn Papist.

In treating of the monstrous doctrines ascribed by Sir Harcourt Lees to the Catholics, we may premise that their own general conduct sufficiently refutes his accusation:—his

strong assertions however, may seem to demand some farther enquiry.

The 4th Lateran council was held in the year 1215, at which were present, most of the christian sovereigns ;—this council therefore may be properly termed a general congress of the temporal, as well as spiritual Powers of Christendom ; they assembled for the purpose of suppressing the heresy of the Manchæans, or Albigenses, whose doctrines were (according to Mosheim) not only subversive of morality, decency, and good order, but even destructive to the human species,—it was supported by the Counts of Thoulouse, Cominges, Foix, and aided by numerous bodies of banditti, hired for this purpose.—The heresy was condemned by the spiritual authority of the church ; and the Fiefs of the princes encouraging it, were declared forfeitures to their liege lords, by the authority of the sovereigns, there assembled :—the censures of this council or rather congress were never promulgated, and scarcely known in this island, but were directed (we believe, solely) against the Manchæans or Albigensis, and the princes above mentioned, who encouraged and protected the votaries of this pernicious heresy.

The council of Constance, held in the year 1414, expressly declares that it is heretical to affirm it lawful for a subject to kill his prince, on any pretence whatsoever, ses-

sion 15. one solitary instance of the contrary doctrine being maintained, occurs in Marianna, whose book was condemned, and publicly burnt by a provincial council of her own order; this Mariana was a Spaniard, born at Talavera, in the year 1537, who became a Religious in the year 1554;—he was also condemned by the parliament of Paris, and by the doctors of Sorbonne, and his book burnt by the hands of the common hangman.

The council of Trent assembled in the year 1545, and continued to the year 1563, declares, that to violate the least point of public faith given to heretics, is a crime punishable by the laws of God and Man; session, 15 and 18. The doctrine then of the Catholics teach them that no power on earth can absolve them from allegiance to their sovereigns and civil magistrates, and obliges them to keep faith with all men:—when therefore, the Revd. Author asserts, that according to the 4th Lateran council, oaths taken contrary to the interest of the Popish church are not to be called oaths, but perjuries, and that it is still in force, we must question the accuracy of his information, in regard to its being a received doctrine among the catholics;—the council of Constance, and subsequently the council of Trent decreed the very reverse, and the doctrine of the last geueal council must now be like the prevailing one:—the

oaths taken by the priests and Bishops regard only spirituals, that part which refers to the Rights, Honors, State and Power of the Pope is confinad (as the Catholics assert) to such as live under the Pope's temporal jurisdiction, or the jurisdiction of a Catholic Sovereign ;—Our own sovereigns are bound (the author proceeds) by the coronation oath “ to the utmost of their power to maintain the true profession of the gospel,” but by gospel, we are enjoined to do unto all men as we would they should do unto us ; persecution therefore, in the slightest degree, is a departure from this precept,—“ and the Protestant reformed religion as established by the laws”—whether will the Protestant Religion be better maintained by an observance of, or a deviation from, the doctrine contained in the Gospel ? “ to preserve the Bishops, shops and Clergy of this Realm, and to the churches committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges as by law, do or shall appertain to them, or any of them,” Catholic Emancipation will not encroach upon these rights and privileges, it will only procure an equal participation of civil rights and privileges for the Catholics, which in compliance with the Gospel, the Protestants are bound to grant, as they in a like situation, would wish to obtain the same privileges for themselves.

As Sir Harcourt Lees is so very liberal in

his application of censure upon individuals, upon Parties, upon Sects, who may differ from himself in opinion, with respect to the three natural points which concern human Life, Religion, Morals and Politics, we presume that he bears in mind and accords with the assertion of Demosthenes,* “that all men are, by nature, prone to delight in detraction and invective,” but that, through the multiplicity of his studious pursuits, the remainder of the sentence, in which this assertion is contained, has entirely escaped his recollection,“ but to be disgusted with those who praise themselves,” as he is no less liberal in self Commendation ;—The Athenian Orator indeed recounts to his Audience the services he had rendered the State, during his Administration, but handsomely, apologizes for this conduct, by premissing that he was obliged to pursue this method, in order to refute the Calumnies of his Adversary, and that therefore the odium, naturally attendant upon self Praise, ought to rest upon the Individual, who had compelled him to bring forward such a Relation : Sir Harcourt Lees, however had no adversary to contend with ; no one disputed his merits ; of course he had no Calumnies to refute ; we must conclude therefore, that he expects some material Re-

* φυσει πασιν ανθρωποις υπαρχει των μεν λοιδοριων κ των καλωγηριων
 ακακων ηδως, τοις επαινεσι δ αυτης αγδεσθαι

ward for his present and former Exertions, and therefore points out his peculiar claims lest they should remain unknown and extinguished; his success we wish not to prevent; our aim is to guard the Public (since men are naturally inclined to delight in censure) from imbibing prejudice through the agreeable medium of invective.

To give advice, without giving offence, is a serious difficulty;—it has been pertinently observed, that to give advice is to seize an occasion of displaying our own wisdom, at the expence of others, and however readily a superiority in all other respects, may be admitted, the assumption of superior sense and understanding is univerrally offensive; the learned Baronet has made a pompous display of his diligence, his research, his consequent information, and urges his claim to attention, from the mortifying circumstance of our inferiority in understanding, when compared with his own:—making no pretensions to superiority of intellect, claiming only the free exercise of reason and common sense, and suspecting that some ingredients in the Rev. Baronet's prescription (should it be adopted) might prove injurious to the general system; We are anxious to preserve the constitution sound and vigorous, and being members of the public, we look upon ourselves as included in the number of patients, we shall therefore take the li-

berty, without further ceremony, of examining (as far as we can understand it) into the composition of his Antidote,

The Revd. Author thus expresses himself: “to the superintending care of an energetic, “firm, and most popular administration, I “with confident security resign the civil and “constitutional difference of my country; “the established government in state, may “in such hands be saved from destruction;” we must beg leave in this particular, to dissent from his prescription (of which we deem this an ingredient, since he recommends it by the authority of his own example) as, however energetic, firm, popular, and even strenuously devoted to public liberty the present ministers may be, they are but men, of course liable to error and assailable by the temptations of power and interest we would, on the contrary, recommend a jealous vigilance with respect to every measure of every administration;—the immediate interests of a minister may be distinct from those of the people, he may therefore, in some instances be induced to sacrifice all considerations for the public good, to the prevailing motives of avarice and ambition:—and here we will repeat our dissent from a Right Honorable Gentleman, should he have asserted (which however, we gather only from a News-paper report) that the people have no right to enter into discussions concerning

civil Polity in general, or the immediate measures of government; his legal experience we presume, will inform him that a Trustee is accountable for the proper management of his trust;—both the executive and legislative bodies are trustees of the people, to whom they are responsible, for the due discharge of the sacred trust reposed in them; the more they enquire into the effects resulting from the measures of every administration, the more competent will they become in appreciating the merits of their respective trustees, and the more clearly will they discern the propriety of conferring upon, or withholding from them their farther confidence.

He considers “unrestricted Emancipation to be impossible, so long as the Constitution in Church and State shall be Protestant” and asserts “that the necessity of excluding Papists from Parliament, and from the great offices of State, is imperious, in order to preserve both from destruction.” Neither can we subscribe to this opinion of the Revd. Author;—We have endeavored to prove (and hope with success) that the Authorities he quotes are unfounded, or obsolete and at present of no force:—an equal Participation in the same rights and privilege produces union and harmony, even among those who, from the circumstance of receiving different educations, may have imbibed

different religious tenets ; whilst a partial preference, and distinct privileges annexed to the profession of a particular faith, encourage the growth of jealousy and discussion :—*Divide and impera* is the boasted maxim of a crooked policy ;—a well constituted Government consults for, and endeavours to promote the common welfare of all its subjects :—what have been the measures of policy pursued with regard to Ireland ? The bulk of its population is Catholic, and has during a century groaned under the arbitrary sway of a Protestant Government, partial to professors of its own faith, and arming them with distinct privileges ;—the Catholics have been subject to an Oligarchy, composed of their declared opponents ;—they have been debarred from acquiring real property ;—their Estates have been liable to confiscation, for refusing to swear contrary to their consciences ;—they have been restricted in the free exercise of their religion, and from educating their children in that faith which they esteemed the true one ;—can it be expected, that these circumstances should attach them to the constitution ? they acknowledge its excellence, and that its subjects enjoy a greater portion of liberty, than the subjects of any other state in Europe ;—they look upon themselves, however, not as its subjects, but its slaves :—instead of interminable hostility against the Catholics, we would earnestly re-

commend conciliation ;—let them be once admitted to all the privileges of subjects, they will (we dare affirm) become equally zealous in their attachment to the Constitution, as the Protestant himself.—In maintaining the contrary opinion, we regret that the Revd. Sir Harcourt Lees, should forget his character as a gentleman and a scholar, for, however he may vent his spleen in gross and vulgar abuse, a sinner against good-breeding, and the laws of decency will no more be esteemed a good author, than will a sinner against grammar, good argument, or good sense.

He is scarcely less abusive in his animadversions upon the Fanatics or Evangelical, and if they, in reality, maintain such tenets as he attributes to them, we must acknowledge that they are objectionable ; they tend to diminish the general benovelence of mankind, and to render them regardless of moral rectitude ; but persecution is still more dangerous, and in proposing a strong test, in addition to the Thirty-nine Articles he seems actuated, in some measure, by a spirit of persecution ; even Bishop Burnet (whose orthodox we presume will not be disputed) confesses that the requiring subscription to the Thirty nine Articles, is a great imposition :—and, would you, Revs. Sir, impose a more grievous test of orthodoxy ?—be assured, that the strength of your test, and its embracing a multitude of objects will not tend to confirm

your establishment:—it may and probably will flourish, in power and wealth, with the government of which it forms a part, but the superior excellence of the doctrines you profess, your own exemplary deportment in private life, togetherwith a zealous exertion in the discharge of your sacred functions, will also render its influence extensive, or its duration permanent:—here we would recommend (but with the utmost deference and humility) the co-operation of Government,—were the gradations in preferment allotted to gradations in merit,—were the dignities of the Church, exclusively, appropriated to eminence in virtue, piety, learning, the clergy in early life would be stimulated to exertion for the attainment of these good qualities, their exertions would, in general, be crowned with success, and thus, at a more advanced period, they would become illustrious ornaments to their profession; whilst the people instructed by the impressive exhortations, and influenced by the upright conduct of their clergy, would be far more inclined to the practise of morality and good-order.

In regard to the radical reformers, their views may possibly be directed to tumult and anarchy, but the ostensible object of their contemplation do not appear to us visionary and impracticable, such material changes, however, admitted at once into the system, might be attended with danger and convulsion, we

wilt by no means venture to deny that it might be so, yet Burnet (zealously devoted to Government in his time) recommends the annual Election of Representatives as an effectual expedient to stem the progress of corruption, which had, even then, made great inroads among all ranks of people: Election by ballot would defeat all the purposes which, at present, induce many of the candidates to resort to bribery; whilst universal suffrage would disable them from tampering with all the voters:—corruption has moreover in some instances, and at some periods, insinuated itself into the representative body;—the expediency of reform, therefore, can be no longer doubtful;—and that reform is necessary, the most eminent characters in our Empire have, long since, acknowledged, they have likewise on several occasions attempted to introduce it;—whilst Foreigners contemplating the excellence of the British Constitution, and enumerating the beneficial consequences, resulting to the several Nations of Europe, from the example of a free and independent State, flourishing among themselves, have deeply lamented the existence of a vice in the system, which must gradually undermine it;—O Honte (says Raynal) l'Homme riche achete les suffrages de ses Commettans, pour obtenir l'Honneur de les représenter; la Cour achete les suffrages des Representans gouverner plus despotique-

ment ; une Nation sage ne travailleroit elle pas a prevenir l' une & l' autre corruption ? N' est il pas etonnant que cela ne se soit pas fait, le jour qu'un Representant eut l' impudence de faire attendre ses Commettans dans son Antichambre, & de leur dire ensuite, je ne sais ce que vous voulez, mais je n'en ferai qu'a ma tete ; je vous ai achetés fort cher, & j' ai bein resolu de vous vendre le plus cher que je pourrai :—we here confidently recommend a radical reform in ourselves, for the purpose of insuring to the body politic a sound and perfect recovery—Let every member of the state correct his own vices—and the voters should not only correct themselves ; but it is their duty to examine into the qualifications which can entitle a candidate to their approbation ;—is he frugal in his expences' without meanness?—is he liberal, without profusion or ostentation?—is his private life marked by no destructive vice?—they may safely conclude that such a representative, unassailable by corruption, will discharge his trust with fidelity.

In consequence of the demise of our late and regretted Monarch, the period is at hand when the people will have a legal opportunity of freely and openly expressing their sentiments, in regard to the measures lately adopted by Administration ; —if, in their opinion, the good and loyal subject is farther protected, by these means,

in the unmolested enjoyment of his rights and privileges ;—if the cottage of the meanest peasant still remains his castle, from which he may legally repel all violent intrusion ;—if the Press restrained only in its licentiousness, is confirmed in the full exercise of its liberty (the great Bulwark of the British Constitution)—then will their former members, who supported such enactments, be returned to Parliament, as deserving objects of their preference:—but should they think that encroachments on civil liberty are substituted as safeguards to the Constitution ;—that the habitation of every British subject is exposed, even, to nightly visitations, at the capricious will of a Magistrate ;—that the liberty of the Press is essentially violated, under a specious pretext of correcting its abuses, and preventing the dissemination of blasphemous and seditious libes ;—the people will be aroused to a consideration of the danger impending over themselves, and therefore be cautious in their choice of Representatives ;—in either case, however, we finally recommend inviolable abstinence from corruption :—Let no views of present emolument, no promises of further patronage,—let neither threats, nor intreaties prevail on you to depart from the conscientious discharge of your duty as voters :—the corruption of the constituent, will serve as an apology for the corruption of the Representative

body:—exhibit in yourselves a generous example of reform:—your Representatives, chosen for the good qualities you have discerned in them, will copy the example and thus will the pernicious disorder, preying upon your very vitals, be in some measure checked, if not entirely eradicated from your constitution.

We have thus far obtruded upon the Public, in consequence of our objections to the Antidote of Sir Harcourt Lees, and conclude with an anxious wish that, whatever application may be adopted by them, it may most conduce to the advancement of civil and religious liberty, and may best contribute to the present and future welfare of the people.

PHILODEMUS.

